

Before-Reading Strategies



Open House



Reading Skills

- Making predictions
- Making generalizations
- Making inferences
- Rereading

Overview of the “Open House” Strategy

Strong readers automatically make predictions, inferences, and generalizations when they read. Reluctant readers do not come by these skills naturally, but they can be taught the skills by practicing. The “Open House” reading strategy (also known as the “Tea Party”) gives the students an opportunity to talk to each other about segments of a short story, chapter, or poem and predict what will happen next. They will make inferences and generalizations about the characters, setting, mood/tone, plot/action, conflicts, and point of view by discussing the segments. Before starting this activity, discuss the characteristics of an open house, making sure the students understand that people are supposed to mingle, talk, and share information.

Activity for the “Open House” Strategy

Use this strategy with the first chapter of *Wish You Well* by following these steps:

1. Photocopy the first chapter of the novel (permission granted by Warner Books, Inc. to photocopy for educational purposes), and cut the chapter into segments, one segment for each class member. If you have a large class, you may wish to have the class members work in pairs in order to keep the segments from being too short.
2. After mixing the segments, distribute the segments to the students.
3. Give the students a few minutes to read silently their given segments.
4. Distribute the “To Discover” sheets (see page 17).
5. Next, tell the students that they have 10 minutes to “meet and greet” as many “guests” in the room as possible. The idea is to create an open house atmosphere in which the students spend a minute or two with other students and share the information from the chapter as revealed in their given segment. Have the students record on their sheets what they discover from others.
6. After the open house, ask the students to return to their seats and take a few minutes to record additional questions, predictions, inferences, and generalizations related to the chapter. Ask for volunteers to share their discoveries, predictions, and questions. You may wish to compile and display the shared information on a chart, on an overhead transparency, or on the board.
7. Now, hand out the books and ask the students to read Chapter 1.
8. After the students are finished, ask them to write down the differences between their predicted information and the actual information.
9. Follow up with a class discussion.

This activity works well with the first chapter of *Wish You Well*. It is also effective when used at a turning point in the middle or at the conclusion of the novel. This strategy works with nonfiction, such as reports and essays, poetry, and short stories. Customized “To Discover” pages will need to be created to match the objectives of the reading.

Assessment

Students may be assessed on participation in the mingling section of the “Open House” activity according to the following rubric:

- **EXCELLENT** participation (Score 4): The student meets with at least four other class members and fills in all boxes on his or her “To Discover” sheet.
- **ABOVE AVERAGE** participation (Score 3): The student meets with at least three other class members and fills in all but 1 or 2 boxes on his or her “To Discover” sheet.
- **ADEQUATE** participation (Score 2): The student meets with two other class members and fills in 4 or 5 boxes on the “To Discover” sheet.
- **BELOW AVERAGE** participation (Score 1): The student meets with one other class member and fills in 2 or 3 boxes on his or her “To Discover” sheet.
- **NO** participation (Score 0): The student does not meet with any class members and fills in 0 or 1 box on his or her “To Discover” sheet.

Open House — To Discover...

Characters

Point of View

Setting

Mood/Tone

Plot/Action

Conflict(s)

I predict...

Probable Passage 1



Reading Skills

- Establishing a purpose for reading
- Making predictions
- Using prior knowledge
- Analyzing chronological order

Overview of the “Probable Passage” Strategy

This strategy can be adapted for use prior to the students’ reading any section of the novel. The lesson will give students practice in predicting what a passage will be about. They will also learn to activate prior knowledge when they approach a reading assignment. They will further develop their skill at monitoring their own reading comprehension and will develop their understanding of narrative conventions.

The teacher chooses a passage, analyzes it, and selects 10 to 15 important words and phrases from the passage that the students will need to understand. The teacher then constructs a “probable passage” that uses the selected words and summarizes/condenses some of the ideas in the actual passage. The teacher makes a fill-in-the-blanks version of the probable passage by deleting the selected words and phrases and replacing them with blanks. After discussing the list of key words with the students, the teacher asks them to insert the key words and phrases into the blanks. The students then compare their filled-in probable passages to the actual passage.

Activity for the “Probable Passage” Strategy

1. Before the students read chapter 30 of *Wish You Well*, present them with a list of key words. Review the words, and discuss the definitions of any that are unfamiliar (e.g., *fretted*, *lard*.) (See #1 on the blackline master on the next page.)
2. Ask students to arrange the words into categories on the chart provided. (See #2 on the blackline master.)
3. Distribute the probable passage from which the key words have been deleted, and ask the students to insert the words into the blanks. (See #3 on the blackline master. Note: You may wish to refer to the categories in your probable passage. However, since the passage is from chapter 30, the students should already be familiar with most of the ideas from having read chapters 1 through 29 and may not need such prompts.)
4. Ask the students to read their probable passages and discuss their choices.
5. Assign the reading of chapter 30.
6. Ask the students to compare their probable passages to the actual passage.

Probable Passage 1 — *Wish You Well*, Chapter 30

1. Read and discuss the following list of key words and phrases:

canned in jars

Eugene

night

heavy wagon

sharing

Louisa

filled lard buckets with berries

nothing to eat

buckets of potatoes

fretted

bags of cornmeal

Billy Davis

late summer

harvested

2. Categorize each of the words in one of the columns in the chart below:

Setting	Characters	Actions	Objects

3. Probable Passage: Place the key words from your chart in the probable passage below. Change word categories at this point if you wish.

In _____ (time), food was abundant, and it was time for _____, _____, and the children to harvest their crops. They _____ they picked and made into jams and preserves. They shucked the corn and picked beans, tomatoes, and fruits. All this they _____ and stored under the stairs. Turnips, rutabagas, carrots, and potatoes were dug for winter storage. While Louisa and her family had plenty of food, they also thought of those who had _____. This included _____ and his family. One dark summer _____, Billy brought a wagon to Louisa's farm. Lou was surprised when her grandmother and Eugene began loading _____, _____, and all sorts of food into the wagon. Billy then drove the _____ home with food for his mother and his brothers and sisters. Lou learned that Louisa had been secretly _____ the food she _____ with the Davis family for many years. Louisa told her granddaughter that George Davis "never once _____ about where the bounty come from."

4. Read the first section of chapter 30 of *Wish You Well*. Briefly discuss the differences between the actual passage and your probable passage.
5. Suggested journal topic: Imagine that you are Lou, and describe how you would you feel if you learned that your grandmother had been giving food to George Davis's family.

Assessment

Use the following rubric to assess the students' work:

- ACCOMPLISHED: (Score 3): Can predict exactly what will happen in the actual text.
- DEVELOPING (Score 2): Can predict some of the events that will occur in the actual text.
- BEGINNING (Score 1): Cannot predict, based on the context clues, what will happen in the actual text.

Answer Key for the Preceding Probable Passage

In late summer (time), food was abundant, and it was time for Louisa, Eugene, and the children to harvest their crops. They filled lard buckets with berries they picked and made into jams and preserves. They shucked the corn and picked beans, tomatoes, and fruits. All this they canned in jars and stored under the stairs. Turnips, rutabagas, carrots, and potatoes were dug for winter storage. While Louisa and her family had plenty of food, they also thought of those who had nothing to eat. This included Billy Davis and his family. One dark summer night, Billy brought a wagon to Louisa's farm. Lou was surprised when her grandmother and Eugene began loading buckets of potatoes, bags of cornmeal, and all sorts of food into the wagon. Billy then drove the heavy wagon home with food for his mother and his brothers and sisters. Lou learned that Louisa had been secretly sharing the food she harvested with the Davis family for many years. Louisa told her granddaughter that George Davis "never once fretted about where the bounty come from."

Probable Passage 2



Reading Skills

- Establishing a purpose for reading
- Making predictions

Overview of the “Probable Passage” Strategy

Students with little reading experience often want merely to read a passage in order to say that they’re finished. They loathe taking the time necessary truly to comprehend a specific text. Moreover, they don’t think about what will happen in the text based on what they already know about it. The “Probable Passage” strategy enables students to stop and make predictions prior to reading as well as encourages students to reflect on what they have read.

Students will discuss the meanings of words, arrange these words in categories according to their functions in the excerpt, fill in the blanks of a probable passage, and then read the actual story to compare and contrast similarities and differences.

Activity for the “Probable Passage” Strategy

1. Tell students that they will use a strategy called “Probable Passage” to help them make predictions about selected texts.
2. Give students the blackline master (on the next page) with a list of words and phrases. Read each word or phrase aloud and discuss the meaning of each.
3. Have students characterize these words or phrases by listing them on a chart containing four categories: setting, characters, problem, and resolution. Once the students are finished, discuss this chart to see where differences exist.
4. Provide a probable passage to the students. Students should use the words from their charts to complete a probable passage, as shown in #3 of the blackline master
5. Finally, have the students read chapter 27 of *Wish You Well* and compare it to the probable passage. Discuss the differences between the prediction and the actual text.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| be a boy | refuses | in the barn |
| Billy Davis | warm, summer night | pregnant mare |
| Louisa's farm | apologizes | angered threats |
| take a rifle | Lou | no midwife |
| hot water and clean sheets | most miserable soul | greedy actions |

- | Setting | Characters | Problem | Resolution |
|---------|------------|---------|------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

- The chapter begins on a _____. _____ is one of the characters who arrives at _____ stating that his mother is about to give birth, but there is _____. Louisa agrees to go and Eugene encourages her to _____. When Louisa insists on going alone, Lou refuses to stay. Upon arrival, George Davis is _____, tending to the _____. Louisa instructs Lou and the Davis children to gather _____. While Louisa is with Sally Davis, the climax of the chapter occurs — Lou _____ to Billy Davis. Yet, just when they begin to resolve their conflict, George Davis offers _____, telling Louisa he wants her off his land. When Louisa _____, he demands that the baby _____. When the baby is born, Sally names him after _____. The chapter ends with Louisa and Lou's discussing George Davis' _____. They describe him as a _____.

- [illegible]

Assessment

Use the following rubric to assess the students' work:

- ACCOMPLISHED: (Score 3): Can predict exactly what will happen in the actual text.
- DEVELOPING (Score 2): Can predict some of the events that will occur in the actual text.
- BEGINNING (Score 1): Cannot predict, based on the context clues, what will happen in the actual text.

Answer Key for the Preceding Probable Passage

This chapter begins on a warm, summer night. Billy Davis is one of the characters who arrives at Louisa's farm, stating that his mother is about to give birth, but there is no midwife. Louisa agrees to go and Eugene encourages her to take a rifle. When Louisa insists on going alone, Lou refuses to stay. Upon arrival, George Davis is in the barn, tending to the pregnant mare. Louisa instructs Lou and the Davis children to gather hot water and sheets. While Louisa is with Sally Davis, the climax of the chapter occurs — Lou apologizes to Billy Davis. Yet, just when they begin to resolve their conflict, George Davis offers angry threats, telling Louisa he wants her off his land. When Louisa refuses, he demands that the baby be a boy. When the baby is born, Sally names him after Lou. The chapter ends with Louisa and Lou's discussing George Davis' greedy actions. They describe him as a most miserable soul.

Story Impressions



Reading Skills

- Establishing a purpose for reading
- Forming an overall impression of the text through predictions

Overview of the “Story Impressions” Strategy

The teacher chooses key words, phrases, or concepts from several chapters and lists them in the order in which they appear in the chapters. The list will normally consist of 10 to 15 items. Students should be given enough words to form an impression of the chapters but not so many that they are able to create entire episodes that they will encounter in reading.

Activity for the “Story Impressions” Strategy

1. Make a list of words similar to the following found in chapters 1 and 2 of *Wish You Well*:
 - 1) Lou Cardinal
 - 2) notebook
 - 3) Oz Cardinal
 - 4) story-teller
 - 5) California
 - 6) choice
 - 7) family
 - 8) Virginia
 - 9) Grandmother
 - 10) mountains
 - 11) fatal picnic
 - 12) Amanda’s eyes closed
2. Now present the words in a linked order by displaying the words in a vertical line with arrows connecting one word to the next. The students should see that the words must be used in a particular order. This strategy will help them when they encounter words or terms that are unfamiliar.
3. After the initial discussion, have each student write a paragraph, using all the words in the given order and summarizing what he or she thinks the chapters will be about, thus creating a Story Impression.
4. Place the students in groups of 4 to 5, and allow the group members time to share their Story Impressions so they can compare their predictions.

Important Tips to Remember

1. Students need to write down all their Story Impressions so that they will have something to reference once they read the text.
2. Have students discuss the key words so they are given the opportunity to figure out words that they do not know before they begin reading.
3. In order to prevent giving away the ending, give the students only words that suggest the main idea. Finalizing your list with an event found earlier in the selection rather than at its conclusion will solve this problem.

4. Once the students have written their Story Impressions, have them immediately begin reading the chapters. You should decide how much discussion your students need prior to reading. Some students can complete this assignment at home and return to the next class meeting prepared to read the next chapters.
5. While the “Story Impressions” strategy is similar to the “Probable Passage” strategy, it is less structured.

Assessment

Students may be assessed on the quality of their participation in their groups and receive a class-work grade according to the following rubric:

- EXCELLENT participation (Score 4)
- ABOVE AVERAGE participation (Score 3)
- ADEQUATE participation (Score 2)
- BELOW AVERAGE participation (Score 1)
- NO participation (Score 0)

Below are some specific features for evaluating the paragraph.

	Revise	Accept	Superior
1. Topic sentence is clear and correctly placed.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
2. Mechanics are correct.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
3. Vocabulary and word choices are interesting.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
4. Sentences are clear and related to topic.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
5. Sentences vary in length (8 to 15 words).	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
6. Agreement is correct.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
7. Typing is neat with no mark-outs or whiteout.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
8. Paragraph focuses on a single, unified idea.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
9. Paragraph achieves its intended purpose.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
10. Paragraph is interesting and appealing.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10